

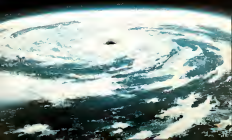
AKIRA 1

1.000 L. Tono - 1.000 L. Tono - 1.000 L. Tono - 1.000 L. Tono



KATSUHIRO OTOMO

At 2:17 PM
on December 8th,
1950,
a new type
of bomb
exploded
over the
metropolitan
area of
Japan



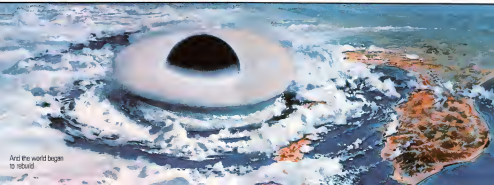
AKIRA

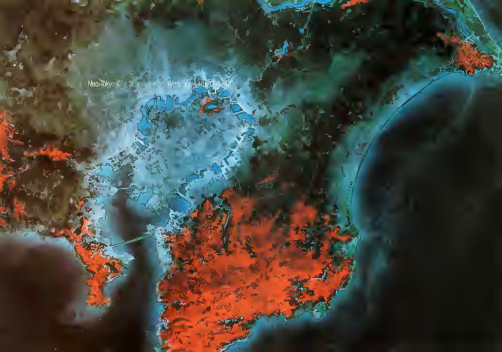
BY KATSUHIRO OTOMO

Chapter 1

THE HIGHWAY







Map: Tokyo Bay, Sagami Bay, and the surrounding area



COME ON, YOU GUYS!
WE'VE GOTTA TAKE
HIGHWAY 28 ALL THE WAY
OVER TO THE OLD CITY--
IF YOU THINK YOU CAN
KEEP UP!



JUST LEAD
THE WAY, RAMBORA.
YOU'LL BE
RIGHT BEHIND
YOU.

STUDENTS AT THE FORTH VOCATIONAL TRAINING SCHOOL, BEING TAUGHT WITH
TOO LITTLE TO LIVE, THEIR LIVES, MARRIAGE AND HIS FRIENDS FOLLOW THE GOLD
PATH FROM THE CITY THAT STOLE THEM...



... TO A SCENE OF UTTER DESTRUCTION THAT HAS ONCE BUSTLING WITH LIFE.





VRRRRNNNNN





RIGHT
BEHIND YOU,
KAMEKA.



I HEAR
YOU TALKING
BUT I DON'T SEE
YOU CATCHING
UP.



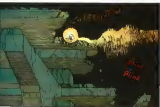
JUST WORRY ABOUT
WHERE YOU'RE LEADING
US. I CAN KEEP UP
FINE.



TROUBLE
WITH YOU IS
YOU NEVER LIVE
FOREVER.

TROUBLE
WITH YOU IS YOU
TAKE TOO MANY
CHANCES.





HEY,
WE'VE COME
TO THE
END OF THE
ROAD...
WHY'D
WE
STOP?

CAUSE
WE HIT
A DEAD
END,
DUMMY.
AND
I DO
MEAN
DEAD.

THIS
IS THE
CENTRE
OF ALL THE
DESTRUCTION
WE'RE
RIGHT AT
THE PLACE
WHERE THE
ROAD
ENDS.



RUN, IT SEEMS ME
THE OTHERS
THINKING OF ALL
THE PEOPLE THAT
DIED HERE



OBVIOUSLY HE MADE
A MISTAKE TRYING
SOMEBODY, LET'S
GO BACK AND TRY
AGAIN



WHAT'S THE BIG
HURRY? YOU
SCARED OF THE
DARK, OR WHAT?



THERE'LL
BE SOME CHANGING
MADE HERE, PRETTY
SOON. I FEEL THIS
IS WHERE THEY WANT
TO HOLD NEXT YEAR'S
OLYMPIAD.

YOU'RE
STUCK UP
RIGHT?



THAT'S
WHAT
I
HEARD—
TELL
HIM,
TETSUO



ME—?



IT'S
THE
TRUTH,
KAZUHO

THEY ALREADY
STARTED WORK
ON IT A BATCH
OF OLD
BUILDINGS AND
OTHER PLACES
WENT DOWN
DOWN AND
EVERYTHING



WHAT
ARE
WE
HAPPY
AROUND
THE
DUMP
FOR
ANY
WAY?

NO
REASON



COME ON!
WE'RE
OUTTA
HERE!



YEAH!

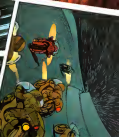
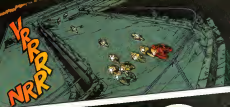


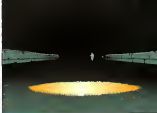
THE
GETTING
HURRY, I SAY
WE SAY AT
HARRINGTON--
AND
THE LAST
DAY
THOSE
KIDNAPERS
OF THE
CHECK!

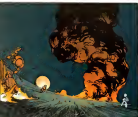
VROOM



VRRRRN









YOU BERNIE!
WHAT THE
HELL WERE
YOU DOING
IN THE
MIDDLE OF
THE ROAD?























DON'T LET THEM
SCARE YOU WE DON'T
HAVE A THING TO
WORRY ABOUT



WE HAVEN'T
DONE ANYTHING
THEY CAN TAKE
US TO COURT
FOR.



WENT WHO
BY A
WOMAN IN
HEART?

HELLO

SEE YOU GUYS
TODAY AT
NINE AT
HURLINER.

LET
ME AT
HELLO

DON'T FORGET,
WE HAVE TO FIND
OUT WHAT HOSPITAL
TETSUOKE IN SO
WE CAN VISIT
HIM.

OKAY



THE EIGHTH DISTRICT
TRUCK FIRM WILL BE
HELP ON THE FOURTH
OF NEXT MONTH WE
EXPECT REPRESENTATIVES
FROM SEVERAL FACTORIES
TO ATTEND AS WELL
AS YOUR PARENTS.



REMEMBER, THIS
WILL BE AN
EXCELLENT
OPPORTUNITY TO
SHOW OFF YOUR
OWN WORK...



ALMOST ALL THE
SCHOOL WHO NOW
WORK FOR MAJOR
CORPORATIONS
WILL ALSO BE
COMING...

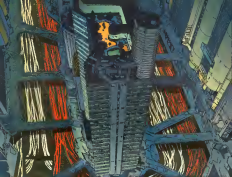


YOU
WANDA
DIE?

YOU CALL
THIS MONEY?
I CALL IT AN
INDEBT!

THIS GUYS
BLEEDING

YEAH...





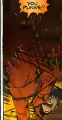


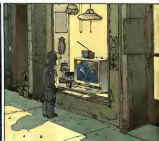








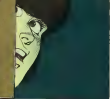




















LOOK!
SMOKE AT
9 O'CLOCK



LOOKS LIKE IT'S
IN THE SEVENTEENTH
DISTRICT.

EMERGENCY!
EMERGENCY!



THIS IS 877-0000
WE'VE SPOTTED
A FIRE IN THE
SEVENTEENTH
DISTRICT

PLACES
POWERED BY AN
EXPLOSION

WE'RE
GOING IN TO
TAKE A
LOOK



ANY EXPLOSION?

IN THE SEVEN-EIGHTH DISTRICT?

WANT DO YOU THINK?

ONE OF OUR PATROLS IS ON ITS WAY.

WE'LL HAVE THE DETAILS SOON ENOUGH.

DO YOU THINK NUMBER 30 WAS BEHIND IT?

IT'S BEEN OVER TWENTY HOURS SINCE HE ESCAPED.

SOON WE'LL BE AT CRITICAL.



MOVE ALONG,
FOR THE MOOSE
ALONG, NOTHING
TO SEE HERE.



HEY!



OH!!

HOW
COME WE'RE
HIDING?



STUPID! YOU
SAID YOU'D
HIDDEN IF WE
GET CUSTODY
AGAIN SO MUCH
LATER LAST
NIGHT!!

IF WE SAY WE
DIDN'T DO
ANYTHING AND
IT WASN'T OUR
FAULT NO ONE
WILL BELIEVE
US.



BEING A JOE
IS A REAL
PAIN IN THE
ASS.



WHATE THE
STORY WITH
THAT LITTLE
WEIRD?



WHAT DO
YOU THINK
RAPESAY DID?
HE REALLY
DESTROYED THE
WIDOWS AND
THE WATER
TOWER?



NOW
SHOULD I
KNOW?



THE
WATER
TOWER.
YOO?



DID YOU
THINK IT WAS
JUST A
COINCIDENCE?



WAIT A
MINUTE--
THAT
GIRL?



I GET
SHE
KNOWS!



YOU
GUYS
SAID
HERE!



HEY!
COME BACK
HERE!











WERE NOT SAFE
BECAUSE THE ADULTS
CATCHING WITH
PEOPLE WHO'RE
AFTER YOU.



ARE THEY
WEARING
WHITE
COATS?



YES, AND
THERE
ARE A
LOT OF
THEM.







NEXT ISSUE: PURSUIT!

AKIRA & OTOMO

In 1970, Japan's comic magazine industry was divided roughly into two types of publications. One was for juvenile readers— from children up to middle teens. The other was for an adult audience, consisting mainly of young salaried workers. **Kadokawa, Ltd.**, one of the country's largest publishers, felt that there was an entire readership group being missed: high school and college students; a readership sensitive to new trends developing in film, music, fashion, all kinds of the arts and entertainment.

Young Magazine, a 200 page biweekly was designed for this potential audience. But finding exactly the right material to capture the imagination of a new readership proved difficult. For two years **Young Magazine** struggled. During this time it attracted the interest of artist-senior **Katsuhiro Otomo**.

Since the publication of his first work in 1973— adapting the short novel **Mato Faleiros by Prosper Mérimée**— Otomo's reputation had steadily grown, based on a number of unique and intense comic short stories (20 to 30 pages in length rather than the hundreds, sometimes thousands, that an ongoing saga can run in Japanese comic). Some of these dealt

with fantasy and science-fiction themes, many with slices of life contemporary drama, all had a visual spirit and rhythm that reflected Otomo's feelings for new wave cinema and modern jazz.

With the publication of **Dome** in 1983, Otomo enjoyed his greatest success. This 238 page comic— which centers upon a conflict between two dwellers in a modern day high rise apartment complex, an old man and young girl, each possessing deeply psychic powers— became a best seller and went on to win Japan's science-fiction Grand Prix for story of the year (previously this prize had only been awarded to novels).

The success of **Dome** and reactions to an earlier work— the still to be completed series, **Fireball**— dealing with a human versus mega-computer theme, led Otomo to consider doing an even larger scale science-fiction story.

The story was **Akira**. And because he liked the new direction it was taking, **Young Magazine** was where Otomo chose to present the major work, which, which complete, would be a six volume graphic novel.

Reader reaction to the first 25 page segment of the series to appear in **Young Magazine** was overwhelming. The material broke with tradition and touched a nerve. Circulation began to rise. The new audience had been found. Today there are about half a dozen titles like **Young Magazine**, **Young Magazine** and two others have a circulation of over one million.

Traditionally in Japan, a

comics series first appears in installments in a weekly or biweekly magazine. When sufficient material has been published, the series is then collected into a book edition (usually this would be about 240 pages) and in a format that is a little bit larger but still similar in size to an American paperback book. Here too,

Akira broke with tradition.

The first Japanese book edition was in a format closer in dimension to the magazine size (about the height and width of one of our comic books) and contained 360 pages. The title and author's name appeared on the cover in English, no Japanese lettering was used. The format and style grew out of Otsu's own concept of making the book edition similar in feeling to American comics. Book designer **Akira Saito** worked closely with Otsu to achieve this goal. Initial fears from Kodansha's Sales Division over the wisdom of the design and packaging of the book faded as advance orders began to pour in. What was originally slated to be a 30,000 print run eventually shot up to nearly 300,000 copies. The first book edition of **Akira** became a number one bestseller.

That was in September of 1984. Three other volumes have come out each year since then. All four had the same sort of phenomenal reception. The fifth volume is complete, and will shortly see print. With print runs now at about half a million copies each, the completed saga of **Akira** will have a total of two and a half million copies in print.

And that's not really the end.

Otsu, in addition to his comics work, is a designer of TV commercials for clients such as Suntory, Canon, and Honda and acted as director, storyboard, designer, and illustrator on an animated film of **Akira** that has been playing the United States this year.

Otsu has also been very involved in the production of the English language version of **Akira** since this is the first time that his work has appeared in the United States in translation and also the first time it has appeared completely in color. His own studio, **MASH ROOM Co., Ltd.**, prepared the rejected artwork from which we reproduce (Japanese comics are originally done to read from right to left and their dialogue balloons and sound effects are designed for lettering that reads vertically). Through Kodansha's editors in New York and Tokyo with whom we work, Otsu sent the material at each stage of development, providing notes on the strict adaptation by **Joe Duffy** and furnishing color guides to **Steve Oliff**, who was his personal choice for colorist on the project.

This career in full phases in the production of his work is certainly one of the factors in making **Akira** the phenomenon that it was for Japanese readers. The other factors are surely the industry and excitement that is brought to the telling of the story. Now, thanks to **Kodansha, Inc.** and **Kodansha, Ltd.**, American readers can at long last share in that phenomenon.

KATSUHIRO OTOMO

written & directed by

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ritualist, collaboration

Epis. Comics
JO BERRY
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KEITH COLLARD
KIMCE EVANS
ROBERT CARROLLA
production

MARK CARROLLA
ritualist, assistant, Epis. editor

ARCHIE GOODMAN
editor, Epis. editor

The Third World War began in 1952 with the explosion of a new type bomb over Japan. Thirty-eight years later, the world is at last recovering. But in Neo-Tokyo, near ground zero of the original destruction, a strange encounter takes place. Kaneda—youth, restless, committed to defying authority—nearly runs down a child with his motorcycle. A child with the weathered face of an old man. A child with powers beyond physical control. The child is Number 28. He is the harbinger of deadly events that sweep Kaneda into a struggle between powerful and secret forces. At the center of this struggle is something feared and prized for the potential to shake the recovering world. Someone or something known only as . . . AKIRA.

KATSUHIRO OTOMO'S



This scan produced by:



I love um

I buy um

I preserve um

AKIRA



BY KATSUHIRO OTOMO

BOOK ONE



This is number 12403, of one thousand five hundred
in the limited hardcover edition of
KATSUSHIRO OTOMO'S AKIRA, BOOK ONE



AKIRA

BY KATSUHIRO OTOMO





GULP!



I TOLD YOU
I DON'T
HAVE TIME
FOR GAMES!



WELL, THE
GAMES ARE
OVER!

AAAAH!



ARE YOU
GIVING
UP?



GET
OUT OF
MY
MIND!